United Nations E/CN.5/2019/NGO/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
24 October 2018

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-seventh session
11–21 February 2019
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly: priority theme: Addressing inequalities and challenges to social inclusion through fiscal, wage and social protection policies

Statement submitted by International Kolping Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.

18-17771 (E) 291018

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Statement

KOLPING INTERNATIONAL and the world community share a clear responsibility.

In 2016, there were at least 65.6 million people worldwide who had been forcibly displaced for many different reasons. Many fled their home country and crossed international borders, seeking safety in neighbouring countries. Eighty-four per cent of refugees were living in poor and middle-income countries at the end of 2016. Only a minority of refugees arrived in Europe, as many of them lacked the financial resources to flee over long distances, the routes were in a poor condition or unsafe and border barriers made it impossible for them to go any further. In 2016 alone, far more than 5,000 refugees drowned while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. The real figures may be much higher. Given the humanitarian needs of displaced people, it is critical to combat the root causes of forced displacement.

The root causes of displacement include wars and conflicts, as well as religious, economic and political issues. Famines, discrimination, persecution and violation of human rights, social exclusion and forced displacement, land grabbing, misery and exploitation and the consequences of climate change are other reasons why people leave their homes.

In his encyclical letter LAUDATO SI' (2015) Pope Francis expressed concern about the care for our "common home" and called for social inclusion and for an environmental, economic and social ecology as part of an integral ecology. He explained his concern for our common home, inter alia, with the following concerning trends:

- Highly developed technology that is used, particularly by globally acting companies for purposes of domination and to increase people's dependency.
- A globalization of indifference marked by overconsumption and an excessive lifestyle, which result in poverty and environmental problems.
- The waste of natural resources and damage to the environment brought about by overconsumption and capitalist exploitation.
- The overconsumption of natural resources due to capitalist exploitation.

Personality, subsidiarity and solidarity are guiding principles of Catholic Social Teaching for a social order that corresponds to the Christian concept of the human person. The Teachings explain who must bear which responsibility and when. On the basis of its self-image, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL expects itself and the world community to assume responsibility in combating the root causes of displacement.

Firstly, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL sees the responsibility of the individual: Every individual must question his or her consumerist behaviour, especially those living in the industrialized countries. Anyone can promote or support projects and activities that aim at improving the life of the needy in their home countries. Anyone can speak up on behalf of those who are oppressed and at risk, who go hungry or are persecuted and anyone can defend their interests in public.

Secondly, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL sees its own responsibility as an international NGO: KOLPING INTERNATIONAL is making its contribution as an international Catholic social association by calling upon governments to work for a just world economy and to pursue a foreign policy that is guided exclusively by humanitarian principles and the respect for human rights.

Thirdly, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL recognises the responsibility of religious communities like the Catholic Church, which must play an exemplary role

in society. Pope Francis underlines repeatedly that migration flows must be seen as a structural reality of our modern times and that our focus must be placed on developing programs that combat the root causes of displacement. At the same time we must not lose track of changes in the countries of origin. This can, for example, be achieved by church-related development cooperation in the countries concerned. It must continue to fight for the establishment of just and democratic structures, for the protection of human rights and it must encourage Christians to become politically active.

Of great importance is, fourth, the responsibility of the economy and its leaders: The economy must free itself from the dogma of capitalist exploitation and consider the consequences of a logic of permanent growth and respond to it. The fundamental concerns of people must be put at the centre of attention again. This implies that production processes must not include natural resources as a no-cost factor. Non-renewable resources must be dealt with in a responsible way. Those who believe that the principle of "ever more consumption" can solve the problems of humanity are wrong.

Finally, fifth, KOLPING INTERNATIONAL considers the responsibility of the world community: Each individual state is obliged to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in a consistent way and without delay. Bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements must not exclusively follow the primacy of capitalist exploitation, but they must respect the human rights and consider the common good. Free trade agreements must not erect a protective barrier to keep products from emerging economies and developing countries out. Trade barriers must be removed to give emerging markets and developing countries a chance to sell their products on world markets. Environmental, economic, trade and development policies must ensure fair trade, sanction unfair trade and preserve and save resources. Government development projects must be based exclusively on the needs of the population in the recipient countries. Development aid must be granted to governments only if they observe democratic and humanitarian criteria. No funds shall be granted to totalitarian and corrupt regimes. People in developing countries and newly industrialized countries must have a chance to become part of international value chains and not to depend on exporting their raw materials only. Private investments in these regions must observe the rules of decent work and aim at true development with a broad impact on the region and the local population and building up a civil society.

The United Nations has a special responsibility when it comes to managing and preventing the root causes of displacement on a global scale. Member states must share an interest in combating the root causes of displacement and no state must shirk its responsibilities.

A long-term, far-sighted and peaceful settlement of regional conflicts can be achieved only if the United Nations is put in a better position to carry out their important tasks.

Each and every individual state must base its foreign policies on the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Any acts of war must be sanctioned by the world community. Arms trade with crisis regions must be consistently prohibited.

More and more, people are forced to flee their country because of environmental destruction and climate change. This is why the world community must commit itself to the Paris Climate Agreement and implement appropriate measures without any further delay in order to limit the effects of global warming. The world community may not relent in its effort to convince those countries that have not yet signed the Agreement or that wish to withdraw from it of the importance of this Agreement.

Land grabbing must be consistently halted. Governments must not sell land to the detriment of its own populations. Poor people and smallholder farmers must be supported in their efforts to assert their rights in their land with documents (land title). The world community must call upon governments and globally acting companies not to get involved in any form of land grabbing.

In the 19th century Adolph Kolping wrote: "Those who show courage, will encourage others!" The world community needs this courage today to tackle the root causes of displacement with long-term strategies. It is important to note that humanity is responsible for its deeds. Root causes of displacement are the result of human behaviour and action. That is why we are all held accountable for the state of our world.

Everyone in the world community, including ourselves, must shoulder responsibility. We call upon everyone to live a responsible life, to act responsibly and to be courageous when it comes to combating the root causes of migration and displacement!